IN THE CLAIMS

Please reconsider the claims as follows:

1.   (currently amended) A method for searching a program guide database, comprising:

receiving, from service provider equipment, a search object comprising a video slice encoded by a service provider, said search object being for an interactive program guide (IPG);

receiving one or more user-generated search criteria via user interaction with said search object, the one or more user-generated search criteria comprising one or more keywords composed by a user;

sending a request for a search along with the one or more search criteria to a head end of an information distribution system;

receiving at least one or more search result results from the service provider equipment; and

wherein the program guide database is searched at the service provider equipment.

2.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

displaying an interactive program guide (IPG) page having include therein at least one received search result.

3.   (original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

highlighting a channel object on the displayed IPG page corresponding to one received search result.

4.   (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the channel object is highlighted by placing a cursor on the channel object.

5.   (currently amended) The method of claim [2] 3, further comprising:

receiving an indication that the highlighted channel object has been selected;

retrieving one or more streams associated with the selected channel object; and

decoding the one or more retrieved streams to recover a selected program.

6.   (original) The method of claim 5, wherein the highlighted channel object is selected by depressing a particular key on a remote control unit.

7.   (original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving an indication to view a next search result; and

displaying an IPG page having included therein the next search result.

8.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more search results are provided within one or more search result IPG pages.

9.   (previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the one or more search result IPG pages are received via one or more video streams identified by respective packet identifiers (PIDs).

10.   (previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein each search result IPG page includes only search results and no other program guide data.

11.   (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the one or more search results are provided in a particular order of relevance within the one or more search result IPG pages.

12.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more search results are received in an order based on scheduled show times.

13.   (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the search result having a scheduled show time closest to present time is provided first and the search result having a scheduled show time furthest from the present time is provided last.

14.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the IPG does not comprise hypertext markup language (HTML) data;

wherein the IPG comprises a plurality of IPG pages encoded as slice-based video; and

wherein the one or more search results are received as video slices generated via slice-based encoding and sent from the head end.

15.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more search results are received as out-of-band data from the head end.

16.   (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the one or more search results are received as compressed data.

17.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the program guide database includes a plurality of program entries for a plurality of channels for a particular time period.

18.   (original) The method of claim 17, wherein program data within the program guide database is indexed for ease of searching.

19.   (canceled)

20.   (previously presented) An interactive program guide (IPG) page, comprising:

at least one guide region configurable to display a listing of a plurality of channels; and

a search window object configurable to receive one or more user-generated criteria for the search of the program guide database, the one or more user-generated search criteria comprising one or more keywords composed by a user;

wherein said IPG page is composed and rendered at a head end and operable to support a search of a program guide database; said IPG page is encoded as a video stream adapted for transmission via a video distribution channel, and said search window object comprises a video slice encoded by a service provider.

21.   (original) The IPG page of claim 20, wherein the search window object is activated by moving a cursor over the object.

22.   (original) The IPG page of claim 20, wherein the search window object is activated by depressing a particular key on a remote control unit.

23.   (original) The IPG page of claim 20, wherein the at least one guide region is configurable to display a guide listing that includes a channel object corresponding to a search result from the search.

24.   (cancelled)

25.   (original) The IPG page of claim 20, wherein the search window object is composed as a bitmap.

26-27. (cancelled)

28.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising:

activating the search object by a user, the activating comprising moving a cursor from an initial position in the IPG to the search object; and

deactivating the search object by the user, the deactivating comprising returning the cursor to the initial position in the IPG from the search object.